

Springfield  
Conservation  
Nature Center



# Harbinger

MARCH and APRIL 2006 VOL 20 NO 2

Over the past decade a new movement has been developing across Missouri and much of America. For several great reasons it has gained interest and popularity with each passing year. It's called *Naturescaping*. You won't find this word in the dictionary, but it is widely used to describe the practice of landscaping or gardening with native plants.

## Naturescaping It's Naturally Growing!

As urban and suburban development has increased, indigenous food and shelter for wildlife have often been replaced with exotic (nonnative) species of plants. However, many insects, birds, and other wildlife have become dependent on various native plants over thousands of years. The most familiar example of this dependency is the monarch butterfly. Monarch butterflies only lay their eggs on plants in the milkweed family, a family of native plants that are commonly found throughout Missouri.

Growing native plants not only provides benefits for wildlife, but also for people and the environment. Using native plants can significantly reduce the time and money spent on gardens, yards, or acreages. These plants are more resistant to drought, pests, and diseases and, therefore, require less water, pesticides, and fertilizer, which can lessen the amount of harmful chemicals that get into our lakes and streams. This translates into less time and money spent on maintaining plants and keeping aquatic environments healthy.

To learn about native plants, their benefits, and how to use them in your landscaping, be sure to attend the *Naturescaping Symposium* on Saturday, March 25, from 9am to 4pm. There will be educational programs on native plants that run concurrently with a native plant sale. Naturally, you won't want to miss it!

## ~ Naturescaping Symposium Highlights ~

Presentation topics will include: landscaping with native plants, water gardening, tree selection, rain gardening, and caring for lawns and gardens in an environmentally responsible way.

Browse the native plant sale from 9am to 4pm.

Free Conservation Department publications on plants and wildlife will be available.

Call or stop by the nature center to request a flier of the day's activities.

## The View From The Bridge

From the hard-core outdoor enthusiast to the person who only casually ventures outside, birds are probably the most common wildlife people encounter. And unlike insects which are typically more numerous (and bothersome), birds have almost universal appeal. Whether you enjoy feeding birds, bird watching, or simply hearing and seeing the evidence of their nesting activities, birds have a constant presence in our lives. It's no wonder we are so interested in them.

On the first day of March, we'll wrap up our 17<sup>th</sup> year of participating in *Project FeederWatch*—a Cornell University-sponsored activity of counting birds found at feeders. This information, along with the bird numbers totaled during the four-day *Great Backyard Bird Count* held in February, helps biologists track population trends. It also helps us monitor birds found at the nature center.

Many people want to identify birds and learn how to attract them. To those ends, we've been busy with a variety of bird-related activities. For those of you who enjoy the challenge of keeping track of all the birds you encounter on an outing, we have just the thing to assist your record keeping. Stop by the nature center and ask for a copy of the revised *Birds of the Springfield Conservation Nature Center* checklist. This annotated list of 176 species of birds is sure to challenge even the most dedicated bird watcher to try to locate and identify as many birds as possible. Some, like the tricolored heron, are vagrants that have only been spotted on the area one or two times. Other birds can only be seen during a specific season while some species may be spotted on a daily basis.

To assist nesting birds, we have several ongoing projects. Cavity nesting birds of all sizes benefit from specially-designed nest boxes that emulate natural tree cavities which are often in short supply. Ten bluebird houses are located in an open area near the nature center entrance road. Colorful prothonotary warblers utilize nest boxes extended on poles above the water along Galloway Creek—their preferred habitat. Finally, kestrel boxes have been installed on the back of signs along US-65 since 1991. While several boxes have been successful in the past, only one box was used during the last nesting season by kestrels and these eggs were infertile and didn't hatch.

Being a good landlord is essential to the success of these nest boxes. Volunteers dutifully check the boxes, remove the nests of invading starlings and house sparrows, and track the number of eggs laid and young successfully fledged from each box. The boxes are cleaned after each nesting season, repaired, and replaced in anticipation of another successful nesting season in the future.

If you'd like to know more about building bird houses, pick up a copy of *Woodworking for Wildlife*. If you'd like to keep track of birds, pick up a checklist. And, if you simply want to enjoy and learn more about birds, go for a walk. You're bound to encounter some.

*Linda* Linda F. Chorice  
Nature Center Manager

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). The area is open daily 8am to 9pm from March 1 to October 31, and 8am to 6pm during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8am to 5pm year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <[www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/springfd](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/springfd)>

## The Nature Nook Gift Shop



20%  
Off

March/April  
Featured  
Publication

## A Paddler's Guide To Missouri

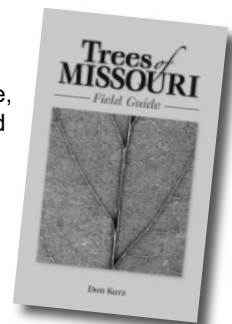
A *Paddler's Guide to Missouri* promotes 43 rivers in the state. The Conservation Department has replaced its former river guide, *Missouri Ozark Waterways*, with *A Paddler's Guide to Missouri*, which includes some central and northern streams that paddlers and anglers can enjoy. Floaters familiar with the previous book by Oz Hawksley will find updated maps and details of those same Ozark streams, along with maps of six more rivers to explore.

**Discounted price: \$4.80 plus tax.**

Heritage card discount does not apply.

## New In The Nook

Based on Don Kurz's original *Trees of Missouri* book, this concise, easy-to-carry field guide will help you identify trees in your yard, neighborhood, or natural area. 174 species are described, with visual organization of species by leaf arrangement and shape. Easy-to-understand descriptions, range maps, and full-color illustrations add to the guide's appeal.



**\$7.50 plus tax**

## Thank You

The nature center would like to thank Terry Monahan and Barney and Annette Dupree for the donation of several natural objects. Thanks also to Dick and Ann Niles, Rebecca Matthews, and Harold Nimmo for the donation of bird seed, books, and a squirrel feeder. We appreciate all of you.



# ASK The Naturalist



Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we answer some common questions about natural events.

## What is the sugar recipe for feeding hummingbirds?

To make hummingbird food, mix one part sugar with four parts water. It is not necessary to add red food coloring to the hummingbird mixture. Male hummingbirds start to arrive in mid-April, making it a good time to put up your feeders. Females will begin to arrive 8-10 days after the males.

## Why are more baby animals born or hatched in the spring than any other season in Missouri?

Spring rains and warming temperatures produce an abundance of new plant blooms and growth. This creates a plentiful food supply making it possible for many animals to nourish and raise young. Also, spring promises a long, warm season for baby animals giving them enough time to grow before the cold, harsh temperatures of winter.

## Where should I mount a bluebird nesting box?

Bluebird boxes should be placed in open, short-grass areas with a few shrubs or trees nearby—the preferred habitat of bluebirds. Hang the boxes 4 to 5 feet off of the ground and facing east, or away from the prevailing winds. Make sure to clean out any old nesting material after each brood leaves so that the nest box will be used again.

## Chipping In . . . Tracy Richter



Introducing children to the outdoors at an early age can be instrumental to their appreciation for what nature has to offer and to how they feel about nature during their adult lives. Volunteer Naturalist Tracy Richter views the outdoors as a nurturing aid for developing curiosity, spiritual growth, and imagination. As she might put it, “it’s never too early to involve *Babes in the Woods*.”

Tracy developed her interest in nature by spending countless hours sitting quietly on her favorite rock at a creek’s edge that flowed into a lake on her family’s property in Minnesota. Here she observed birds, insects, and other wildlife. This sparked her interest to acquire a bachelor’s degree in biology and secondary education and a master’s degree in botany. Her desire to teach about the natural environment led her to become an undergraduate and graduate teaching assistant for six years. After attending graduate school at Washington State and getting married, she resided in California and then in Texas before moving to Missouri in 1997.

One of Tracy’s favorite pastimes is collecting monarch butterfly eggs and watching their metamorphoses into adult butterflies which can be released. She enjoys exploring nature with her two daughters and helping with their science experiments. Her two daughters have grown up attending the *Babes in the Woods* and *Little Acorns* classes. Now daughter Amanda enjoys the *Conservation Kids’ Club*, while her eldest, Amy, participates in the *Conservation TEEN Club* at the nature center. Spending time with her family is a priority, which is why they participate in special events such as *Insect-O-Rama*, *Halloween Happening*, and *Owl Prowls*.

Her familiarity with the nature center programs and her appreciation for the natural environment motivated her to become a nature center volunteer in 2003. Her strong feelings toward introducing young children to nature have led her to teach the *Babes in the Woods* programs for infants and their caretakers and *Little Acorns* programs for preschoolers. She enjoys interacting with children as well as adults. In fact, when she’s not presenting or attending a program you may also find her working the front desk greeting visitors and answering questions.

We appreciate all she does and the impact she’s made on the children in her classes. Thank you from all the staff and *especially* from all the *Babes in the Woods* participants for chipping in.

## Temporary Displays

### March

Salamanders of Missouri  
Photography by Bob Ball

### April

Jim Rathert: Still Behind The Lens  
A Collection of Personal Photographs  
from Missouri and Beyond

### April

Springfield Arbor Day Poster Contest Winners

## Volunteer Milestones

Amy Short .....	3500 Hours
Luther Smith .....	3000 Hours
Larry Scriven .....	500 Hours
Mary Murphy .....	500 Hours
Sally Inskeep .....	400 Hours
Sheryl Heun .....	100 Hours

# NATURESCAPING SYMPOSIUM

## AND NATIVE PLANT SALE

SATURDAY, MARCH 25  
9AM-4PM



Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn.

There will be a series of guest speakers espousing the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale featuring many native plants that are drought resistant and beneficial to wildlife. Call to receive a flier listing the day's activities. No fee or registration required for programs.

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**Harbinger**  
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Missouri Department of Conservation  
4600 South Chrisman  
Springfield, MO 65804-4931  
Phone 417/888-4237  
Fax: 417/888-4241







# March Events

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after March 1 to register for March programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

## 3 Hunter Education

*Friday*, 6-9pm and *Saturday*, 8am-5pm  
This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*

## 4 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

*Saturday*, 9-11am  
Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. Families.



## 9 Parents As Teachers Story Time

*Thursday*, 9:30am, 10:30am, or 11:30am  
Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a “Nature At Its Best” story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children from birth to age five. Each session is forty-five minutes in length.

## 10 Ribbit & Roll Wild Heart Concert

*Friday*, 4-5pm or 7-8pm



The musicians *Wild Heart*, formerly known as *Critter Rock*, are back with an all new musical recipe. Combine the power and influence of melody with a child’s fascination with nature. Stir in crazy actions, colorful media, and lively lyrics to upbeat tunes.

Simmer together with Emmy Award-winning artists Jan and George Syrigos for a piping hot musical serving of nature’s facts and features! Watch your kids absorb nature nutrients for a healthy, balanced conservation education. Bon appétit! All ages. Registration required.

## 11 Hiking Club

*Saturday*, 8am-5pm  
Enjoy an early spring hike with Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam as he leads you through Ha Ha Tonka State Park. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy hiking shoes. Hike is moderate to difficult and six miles long. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

## Intermediate Photography

*Saturday*, 1:30-4:30pm  
This course will cover both 35mm and digital photography using nature as the primary subject. The workshop includes a lecture by Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels and a photography session in the field. Bring your camera, film, lenses, and a tripod. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

## 15 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

*Wednesday*, 11-11:30am  
Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.



## 18 Conservation TEEN Club Feral Hog Management

*Saturday*, 8:15am-2pm  
Feral or “wild” hogs are unwelcome residents of Missouri, damaging crops, gardens, and forest land. Find out how Missouri is dealing with these problem pigs as USDA Wildlife Specialist Scott Radford leads us in the search for signs of feral hogs. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

## GPS For Beginners

*Saturday*, 1-4pm  
Hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) have become more affordable and popular lately. If you’re still in the dark about what GPS devices are or if you want to buy one but need more information, this program is for you. Join Corps of Engineers Ranger Tricia Tannehill as she explains the ins and outs of using Garmin GPS units which will be provided for use during the class. This will be a hands-on course, so dress for an outdoor hike. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

## 19 Discovery Table Migration

*Sunday*, 2-5pm  
The birds are back in town! Stop by and learn about migration and make a bird craft.

## 23 Pond Workshop

*Thursday*, 6-9pm  
Thinking about adding a pond to your property for wildlife or recreational use? Find out everything you need to know about creating and managing a pond during this workshop. Fisheries Management Biologist Kara Tvedt, Soil and Water Conservation District Technician Eric Morris, and Conservation Agent Mike Loe will cover everything from site selection and construction to fish stocking and aquatic vegetation management. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

## 24 Nature And The Arts The Nature Of Art

*Friday*, 7-8:30pm  
Great art doesn’t happen automatically, there are many steps to the final creation. Through the eyes of painter Ross B. Young, journey behind the scenes to learn the little known secrets of how his wildlife, sporting dog, and landscape paintings go from humble scribbles and mere glimmers of inspiration to transform into fine art. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

## 25 Naturescaping Symposium And Native Plant Sale

*Saturday*, 9am-4pm  
Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn. There will be a series of guest speakers espousing the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale featuring many native plants that are drought resistant and beneficial to wildlife. Call to receive a flier listing the day’s activities. No fee or registration required for naturescaping programs.

VIDEOS ARE SHOWN  
EVERY SUNDAY  
FROM 2-3pm.

## 26 For Adults Only Shotgun Shooting Trap

*Sunday*, 1-5pm  
Meet at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range at the Bois D’Arc Conservation Area for an afternoon of shotgun instruction, firearm safety, and shooting practice at clay targets. Shotguns and shells will be provided. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

## 28 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Spring

*Tuesday*, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm  
Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0-2 year old. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

## Conservation Kids’ Club Flower Power!

*Tuesday*, 6:30-7:45pm  
Wildflowers are more than pretty things for us to enjoy. They have an important job to perform—making seeds! Come learn the secrets of Missouri’s spring wildflowers at this month’s meeting. Ages 7-12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

## LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE ACORNS programs to one per month. Registration required.

### Spring Peepers

It’s time for some frog-frolicking fun exploring the life cycle and world of the tiny spring peeper.

**Saturday, March 11, 11am**  
**Friday, March 24, 11am or 1pm**

### Beautiful Blooms

Everyone loves flowers and spring is a great time to see them. Join us for a short hike as we learn what special jobs flowers do. We’ll make a “flowery” craft you can take home.

**Wednesday, March 15, 1pm or 6:30pm**

### Salamander Slide

Meet the salamander family! We’ll investigate some of their special features and find out why salamanders aren’t lizards.

**Saturday, March 18, 11am**  
**Tuesday, March 21, 1pm or 6:30pm**





# April Events

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after April 1 to register for April programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

## 1 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9-11am

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. Families.



## 7 Meet The Author And Book Signing

Friday, 3-5pm

Meet Don Kurz, author of the recently published *Trees of Missouri Field Guide* and pick up a copy of his latest book. (Program information follows.)



### Nature and The Arts Trees Of Missouri A New Field Guide

Friday, 7-8pm

Don Kurz, retired Conservation Department Natural History Chief and author of the recently published *Trees of Missouri*

*Field Guide*, will show slides of trees and discuss his latest book. Learn some of the interesting features of trees including their characteristics, name origins, historical medicinal uses, and their benefits to wildlife. Kurz will sign his new book as well as his other books: *Ozark Wildflowers*, *Scenic Driving the Ozarks*, *Missouri Trees*, and *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri* following the program. Ages 12-adult. *Call today to register.*

## 8 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8am-5pm

Visit a wetland area as you hike along Spring River with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik at Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area. Hike is easy to moderate in difficulty and five miles in length. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

## Close-Up Nature Photography

Saturday, 8:30-11:30am

Take a closer look at nature with Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels to learn the techniques and equipment used for macro photography. Bring a 35mm or digital SLR camera, tripod, and any close-up equipment you have. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

## 9 Primitive Skills Series Useful Plant Hike

Sunday, 2-3pm

Plants have always been important to humans. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explain the folklore and modern uses of several Missouri plants. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

## 12 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11-11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.



## 14 Hunter Education

Friday, 6-9pm and Saturday, 8am-5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*

## 15 Spring Wildflower Hike

Saturday, 1-2:30pm

18 Tuesday, 1-2:30pm

What's blooming on the trails? Take a casual stroll with Volunteer Specialist Ruby Ball for a close look at some of our spring flowers. Ages 7-adult. Registration required.

## 20 Babies In The Woods Celebrates Earth Day

Thursday, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm

Take a stroll for Earth Day. Big people, enjoy nature with your younger generation, children ages 0-2, on this special walk to celebrate our planet. Registration required.

### Earth Day 2006 Work Projects

Registration for work projects begins April 1

8 Garden Group Saturday, 9am-Noon

Bring gloves and garden tools to help spruce up the entrance flower bed. Ages 10-adult.

22 Trail Chippers Saturday, 9am-Noon

Help woodchip a portion of our trail. Ages 7-adult. Bring gloves.

Little Acorn Chippers Saturday, 10-11:30am

Help woodchip the Wildlife Viewing Area. Bring your bucket, gloves, and your favorite Big Person. Ages 3-6.

Conservation Crew Saturday, 1-5pm

Here's your opportunity to help with habitat restoration on the nature center property. We need help eradicating shrub honeysuckle by cutting, digging, or pulling. Wear work clothes and bring gloves. Ages 18-adult.

Adult supervision required for all projects

29 Conservation TEEN Club

Canoe Crew Cleanup Saturday, 9am-Noon

We'll celebrate Earth Day with a community service project. Come and enjoy a morning on the water while cleaning the nature center shoreline using canoes. Ages 12-17.

## 22 Branson/Tri-Lakes Earth Day Event

at Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery, Branson

Saturday, 1-4pm

If you have recycling and environmental questions, bring them! Organizations throughout the community will be providing information on their services and ideas. Individuals and families welcome. Groups, please register. For more information or to register, call the Hatchery at 417/334-4865, ext. 0.

### Earth Day Video *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

Saturday, 2-2:30pm or 3-3:30pm

Elementary-age kids, with an adult, are invited to come for an Earth Day movie. *The Lorax* is a conservation classic with a timeless message.

## 23 Summer Hummers

Sunday, 5-6:30pm

Believe it or not, hummingbirds are returning to the Ozarks. Join hummingbird bander Sarah Driver as she shares information and anecdotes about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some. Families. Registration required.

## 25 Conservation Kids' Club April Foolery

Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm

Join us for an evening of fun as we solve wacky wildlife mysteries and find out that the truth can be stranger than fiction. Ages 7-12 only. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

## National Wildlife Week



Stop by anytime between 2 and 5 pm and learn more about nature in your neighborhood.

### Connecting With Nature In Your Neighborhood

### 23 Sunday - Snakes

These animals aren't slimy or scary! Come see snakes up close and make one of your own.

### 24 Monday - Flowers

Learn to identify flowers and their many parts. Build your own flower to give to someone special.

### 25 Tuesday - Bees

See live bees and learn about their busy lives.

### 26 Wednesday - Fish

Fill up with fascinating facts and catch a paper fish to decorate.

### 27 Thursday - Amphibians

See toads, frogs, and salamanders up close and create some amphibian artwork to take home.

### 28 Friday - Bats

Learn how beneficial these nighttime creatures are.

### 29 Saturday - Mammals

Identify Missouri's furry creatures by their pelts and skulls.

## 29 For Adults Only Spring Hike

Saturday, 8am-3pm

Join Bo Brown of First Earth Wilderness School and hike the Henning Homesteaders Trail at the Ruth and Paul Henning Conservation Area in Branson. Identify spring wildflowers, migratory birds, and learn other interesting facts. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch. Hike is approximately 3.7 miles and is of moderate difficulty. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

### Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

Saturday, 10am-4pm

Stop by to watch members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

## LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE ACORNS programs to one per month. Registration required.

### Raccoon Ramblings

Raccoons are clever nighttime animals. Bring your favorite Big Person and learn more about these critters! We'll also make a raccoon mask to take home.

Tuesday, April 4, 11am or 1pm

Registration begins March 15

### Cottontail Tales

Come have a hoppin' good time as you learn about the life story of this familiar Missouri resident.

Friday, April 14, 11am or 1pm

Saturday, April 15, 11am

### Worm Squirm

Worms squiggle and wiggle and crawl through the dirt. They eat dead plants and make soil for the earth! Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan and learn more about these underground creatures.

Friday, April 28, 11am or 1pm